

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 02717

STADIS////////////////////////////////

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EAIR, UK, FR
SUBJ: CIVAIR - US-UK AVIATION NEGOTIATIONS - POSSIBLE
CURTAILMENT OR CESSATION OF AIR SERVICES IN NO-
AGREEMENT SITUATION

REF: (A) STATE 30234, (B) PARIS 4409

1. WE DO NOT BELIEVE THE BRITISH WILL ACCEPT AN EX-
TENSION OF THE BERMUDA AGREEMENT BEYOND JUNE 22, BUT WE
DO NOT EXPECT THEY WILL TAKE UNILATERAL ACTIONS ENTAILING
A SERIOUS CURTAILMENT OF SERVICES. WE THINK IT IS MUCH
MORE LIKELY THAT THEY WILL AGREE TO CONTINUE SERVICES
SUBSTANTIALLY THE SAME AS HAVE BEEN OPERATING UNDER THE
BERMUDA AGREEMENT, AT LEAST FOR SOME PERIOD OF TIME,
PERHAPS TO LATE AUTUMN, TO ALLOW FOR FURTHER NEGOTIATIONS.
WE BELIEVE THE UK WOULD BE MOST RELUCTANT TO PROVOKE THE
STRONG PUBLIC REACTION THAT PROBABLY WOULD FOLLOW ANY
STEPS THAT MIGHT LEAD TO CESSATION OF SERVICES, PARTICU-
LARLY AT THE HEIGHT OF THE TOURIST SEASON, DURING THE
QUEEN'S JUBILEE YEAR.

2. IF THE BRITISH SHOULD IMPOSE UNILATERAL RESTRICTIONS
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ON US CARRIER'S OPERATIONS TO ANY SUBSTANTIAL EXTENT, IT
WOULD SEEM PREFERABLE TO US THAT THE US REACT AS MUCH AS
POSSIBLE BY DIVERTING TRAFFIC TO OTHER EUROPEAN DES-
TINATIONS RATHER THAN BY RECIPROCAL CUTS IN UK AIR SER-
VICES TO THE US. OPENING THE MIAMI/PARIS ROUTE TO
NATIONAL AIRLINES WOULD BE A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION
AND THE REQUEST BY SEVERAL CARRIERS FOR CAB AUTHORIZA-

TION TO DISCUSS AMONG THEMSELVES ALTERNATIVE SERVICES TO OTHER EUROPEAN COUNTRIES ALSO SEEMS USEFUL. RESTRICTING BRITISH SERVICES WOULD APPEAR TO BE A LOSING GAME SINCE, BY DOING SO, WE WOULD BE DRAWN INTO THE CAPACITY LIMITATION WHICH THE BRITISH ARE ADVOCATING, I.E., IN EFFECT A TACIT ACCEPTANCE OF BRITISH NEGOTIATING OBJECTIVES.

3. WE WOULD ADVISE STRONGLY AGAINST ANY US ACTION AIMED SOLELY AT CONCORDE SERVICES. THE CONCORDE SERVICE IS UNIQUE AND IS CERTAINLY VIEWED BY THE BRITISH MUCH MORE IN TERMS OF NATIONAL PRESTIGE AND INDUSTRIAL AND LABOR POLICY THAN AS A PASSENGER AIR SERVICE. THE OPPORTUNITY TO USE ADVANCED BRITISH TECHNOLOGY IS THE MAIN ISSUE. A DIRECT ATTACK ON CONCORDE SERVICE WOULD SEEM CERTAIN TO RESURRECT ALL THE LATENT FEELING THAT US DELAYS IN APPROVING CONCORDE OPERATIONS TO THE US HAVE BEEN INTENDED TO DESTROY CONCORDE FOR COMPETITIVE REASONS.

4. WE BELIEVE ACTION WHICH WOULD AFFECT ALL UK AIR SERVICES TO THE US, INCLUDING CONCORDE, WOULD PRODUCE CONSIDERABLY LESS SERIOUS REACTION ON THE PART OF THE BRITISH. IN THIS REGARD, THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CAB'S PART 213 RULE, WHICH WOULD AFFECT THE FILING OF CONCORDE' SCHEDULES AS WELL AS ALL OTHER UK CARRIERS' SCHEDULES WOULD NOT SEEM UNREASONABLE. ARMSTRONG

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